



Coast Guard Flag Voice 01

This first FLAG VOICE begins the dialog with getting (and keeping) our workforce filled - the most critical task on my plate. We are all painfully aware that we continue to experience shortages in active duty and reserve components and civilians. One of the HR topics at the September Flag/SES Conference will focus on assessments and retention, and there will be further FLAG VOICE topics on this issue. For every individual, military or civilian, that we retain in the service, we have one less person to recruit/hire. There are many reasons why people leave the Coast Guard. There is always heightened concern over compensation levels when the economy is doing well as we have been experiencing, and I believe will continue to experience for the foreseeable future. While we will do our best to fight for appropriate pay, the reality is that the services are not likely to be able to compensate our people in dollars absolutely comparable to the corporate world. I draw your attention to a commentary in the Opinion section of this week's Navy Times entitled "The key to retention isn't pay increases," written by a Navy PO2. Of course, I would not diminish pay as an important factor. However, his arguments go to the heart of good leadership at all levels - treating all of our people with the utmost respect, even those who at first glance might seem not to be worth the effort. This is one of our core values. One of the principles that I have taken with me and worked hard to inculcate wherever I have served is "the most humble job, done well, merits respect." We have many "humble" jobs in the Coast Guard, and they all are necessary for us to accomplish our missions.

I encourage all to review this enlightening Navy Times commentary - written from the "deck plate" level.

Thanks for listening!

Regards, FL Ames



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